Pope Leo XIV announces July trip to Lampedusa in full offensive against immigration in Italy and the United States

The Pontiff will go to the island, symbol of migratory tragedies in the Mediterranean, at the time of greatest arrival of boats and when Meloni plans to activate naval blockades to NGOs and deportations to Albania

Pope Leo XIV, on his arrival this Wednesday at the celebration of Ash Wednesday in the churches of St. Anselm and St. Sabina, in Rome.
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Leo XIV will visit the Italian island of Lampedusa on July 4, according to the Holy See, which has announced an intense agenda of travel of the Pope within Italy for the coming months. It also includes Pompeii, Naples, Acerra, Pavia, Assisi and Rimini. Lampedusa is undoubtedly the most relevant quote, a choice full of meaning. This small island halfway between Tunisia and Sicily is the point of greatest arrival of migrants by sea to Italy, which precisely with the beginning of summer reaches its peak. In July 2025, 6,487 people arrived in Italy from Libya and Tunisia, most of them to Lampedusa, according to data from the Interior Ministry. In the whole year there were 66,296, almost the same as the previous year.

The visit of Robert Prevost, a U.S. and Peruvian, is known while President Donald Trump pursues foreigners in the United States. The EU's controversial Migration and Asylum Pact will come into force next June. And just when the government of the far-right Giorgia Meloni will be in full offensive against irregular immigration and NGOs that make rescues in the Mediterranean. The Italian executive plans to apply naval blockades to NGO vessels and have already underway again, since spring, the deportations of migrants to Albania.

The island is a symbol of the shipwreck tragedies in the Mediterranean, as one of the worst took place off its coasts, in October 2013, with 368 dead and at least 20 missing. That disaster led Italy and the EU to deploy Operation Mare Nostrum of salvage, although it only lasted a year and gave way to a more restrictive European policy with the border control agency Frontex, which remains until today.

The journey of Leo XIV to the island is a clear sign of continuity with his predecessor, Francis, who four months after being elected in 2013 made his first trip to Lampedusa, also in the month of July. There he made a harsh speech against the "globalization of indifference."

The new pope, elected in May last year, has only made an international trip so far, last November to Turkey and Lebanon. For this year he has only confirmed his intention to go to Algeria, following the footprint of St. Augustine, and other African countries, yet to be determined, on the same trip.

The Vatican also considers a visit of the Pontiff to Spain, perhaps in June, to Madrid, Barcelona and the Canary Islands, although it is still unconfirmed officially. In Spain the declarations that take it for granted are almost daily, as is happening in other countries, and the pressure on the Holy See in this sense is enormous, but the truth is that until there is an official announcement it will not be true.

Of course, the Vatican has already ruled out a visit of Leo XIV to the United States in 2026, another sign of Trump distance. Other trips in the air are to Argentina, home of his predecessor but where Francis never was, and Peru, country in which Prevost lived many years and of which he has nationality. It is

not yet clear whether it would be on the same visit and with other neighbouring countries.